

was twenty-eight. SGT Mora is Micronesia's twenty-eighth loss during the War on Terror.

SGT Mora, born August 13, 1979 to Abraham and Angelina Mora, lived a life of honor and respect. Known to his friends and family as "Sam" or "Champion," SGT Mora is remembered for his devotion to those he loved, and for his dedication and commitment to his fellow soldiers. He also demonstrated exemplary bravery during a recent conflict in Afghanistan. During an ambush SGT Mora risked his life alongside others in the Company to bring an injured soldier back to safety while under enemy fire.

I join our community in mourning the loss of SGT Mora, and I offer my condolences to his parents, Abraham and Angelina; his brothers, Army Reserve Major Michael Mora and Air Force Reserve Master Sergeant Abraham Mora, Jr.; his sister, Katherine M. Aquino, and his fiancée Rosanna Castro. SGT Mora served with honor and distinction, like the many sons of Guam who served before him and gave their lives in defense of our country. He lost his life answering the call to duty of our nation, fighting in Afghanistan in order to help make the United States more secure. For his sacrifice on our behalf, we will always be eternally grateful.

God bless the family and friends of Sergeant Samson Augusto Mora, God bless our uniformed men and women protecting our freedoms, God bless Guam, and God bless our country, the United States of America.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL GEAR UP DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the resolution honoring The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program. I would also like to thank Mr. FATTAH for introducing this bill. He has been a wonderful advocate for the GEAR UP program.

Madam Speaker, The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) is designed to increase the number of low income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Over the last ten years, this program has met with unprecedented success. As we all know, postsecondary education contributes to the well-being of individuals and their communities and helps to build a more vibrant, open-minded and stronger society. The GEAR UP staff members work with students to help them create personal accounts that allow them to explore colleges and careers, discover ways to plan and pay for college, and apply for colleges online. Even more significantly, students participating in GEAR UP programs have a high school graduation rate almost ten points above other low-income students who are not in the program.

While the GEAR UP program across the nation has met with tremendous achievement, I would like to draw attention to my home state of Oklahoma which has been one of the front runners in GEAR UP programs. Oklahoma began this program in 1999, making it one of

the oldest GEAR UP Programs in the nation. Since Oklahoma has one of the strongest GEAR UP programs in the country, other educators from other states regularly visit Oklahoma to learn about new and innovative ways to implement the program. So far, the efforts have served over 31,000 students throughout the state.

Madam Speaker, as a result of GEAR UP, participation in Postsecondary Education has increased 10 percent over the last 10 years overall in the state, and there has been a dramatic increase in participation by minority students. The number of African American students going to college in Oklahoma is up 41 percent, Native Americans attending college has increased 55 percent, and the number of Hispanic students attending college is up 80 percent! These figures are just amazing.

Also, fewer students in Oklahoma are taking remedial courses during their first year of college. In fact, Oklahoma has one of the lowest remediation rates in the nation. The GEAR UP Program has also significantly increased the number of students enrolled in Oklahoma's Promise scholarship program which targeted at low income students. Participation in the scholarship program is up 50 percent since 2005.

In addition to the overall state grant, Oklahoma's universities and local school districts have 8 GEAR UP partnership grants. These partnership grants serve local school districts and have over \$10 million in funding annually from a combination of state and federal dollars that will go towards Oklahoma's educational system.

Madam Speaker, one of these partnership schools, Eastern Oklahoma State College, hosted a summer camp for students enrolled in the program. The camp is designed to establish a positive direction for the students' future and encourage them to make positive decisions. Recently, our office received literally hundreds of letters from Middle and early High School students detailing their experiences with the GEAR UP summer camp. These low-income youth all detailed that they fully enjoyed the programs that GEAR UP guided and that some are now considering college as an option. The vast majority of these letters said that the students would participate again and hope to continue GEAR UP through high school.

The results of GEAR UP are clear. This program has helped thousands of students reach college over the last ten years, and I urge my colleagues to vote for this resolution commending its marked success.

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON S. 2062, NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION REAU- THORIZATION ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. TOM COLE

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 17, 2008

Mr. COLE of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, while I appreciate the remarks of my colleague from Massachusetts, as the only Native American currently serving in this Congress, I would like to clarify a few of his assertions.

As you know, the Federal Government's relationship with Indian tribes over the first couple hundred years of our history was tragic. Continually, it was the policy of the Federal Government to not only exclude Indians from American society through broken treaties, but also to completely eradicate their culture. It would be nothing short of a tragedy for this Congress to carry on that policy.

During the early 19th century, the Cherokee did hold slaves, like thousands of other individuals throughout America at the time. Of course, there is no justification for such a barbaric practice. When the U.S. Government forced the tribe to relocate on the Trail of Tears, to Oklahoma in the 1830s, many slaves accompanied the Cherokees on this journey. After the Civil War, though the Government did not sign any official treaties with the Confederacy, the Federal Government did sign a Treaty with the Cherokee Nation. The Treaty of 1866 states that all the Freedmen and their descendants should retain the rights of Native Cherokees. At no point did this treaty use "citizenship" as the fulfillment of that provision. However, the important point is that the Cherokees honored this treaty and even exceeded the terms by amending their Constitution of 1866 to grant Freedmen, members of other tribes and inter-married whites tribal citizenship. The Cherokee have not failed to keep their part of the bargain.

Even so, Mr. Speaker, this 1866 treaty, which my colleague from Massachusetts insists the Cherokee have broken, was actually broken by the United States several times. For example, the Curtis Act of 1898, The Five Tribes Act, The Dawes Act, and the Enabling Act of the State of Oklahoma all violated the Federal Government's side of the Treaty of 1866. More significantly, however, this Treaty was once again rendered moot, in 1902 when Congress passed a law that fully changed the nature of tribal citizenship in its entirety and eliminated tribal citizenship across the board. Furthermore, the Dawes Commission, which was assigned to change tribal land into Indian allotment land removed the Freedmen from the Cherokee, but still gave them separate allotment land.

When the Cherokee Nation decided to reconstitute itself in 1975, it did so with a new Constitution and a new vision to return to its roots—a family of descendants of Indians. The Cherokee could make this decision because they were unconstrained by the Article IX obligation of the past. It was now up to the Cherokees to begin an era of Federal policy that promoted self-determination under the leadership of President Richard Nixon.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the courts have continually recognized that one of an Indian tribe's most basic powers is the authority to determine its own citizenship, for they are independent political authorities. That being said, the Cherokee have one of the smallest blood quantum requirements in Indian Country. To be a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, an individual has to simply prove that they have only one Indian ancestor on the Dawes Rolls of 1906. To that end, the Cherokees are one of the most racially diverse tribes in the Nation, with thousands of African-American members. Because of the pending court litigation, the Cherokee have allowed the Freedmen to retain the benefits of tribal membership and have even hired genealogists to assist this group in finding an ancestor on the Dawes Rolls.